

SOCK LAUNDRY AND STORAGE UTILITY DEVICE

United States Patent Application

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Sock Washing Laundry and Storage Utility Device

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BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Field of the Invention

The present invention relates to the field of laundry retaining devices, and more particularly to washable laundry bags.

Description of Related Art

Prior art has developed laundry retention devices to retain sets of clothing, (such as matching socks, gloves, etc.), preventing a lost single sock or delicate article of clothing. When washing sets of clothing, such as school or athletic uniforms, it is important to keep the entire outfit together. These retention devices ensure that no pieces will be lost in the wash, as often happens in current home laundry. However, these devices attach directly to the clothing, and do not keep all the laundry conveniently associated in a washing bag.

Prior laundry retaining devices include large laundry pins, mesh bags, and straps or leashes. Unfortunately, these devices don't work satisfactorily when it comes to smaller pieces of clothing, such as a hose, panty, or sock, enabling for such a small item to slip by unnoticed and become lost. Although mesh bags constructed of nylon avoid the snagging and tearing of clothes associated with laundry pins, they still allow for hosiery to be tangled together, causing stretching. Larger clothes tend to wad up and this prevents them from being thoroughly dried, causing a musty odor.

Straps and leashes are suitable for retaining larger articles of clothing (if they have an opening for the strap to pass through). A drawback to the strap is that it has been

known to lose a sock or other small item that doesn't have an opening for the strap to be laced through.

Brief Summary of The Invention

The present invention has been designed to serve as a multi-purpose device for separating and retaining paired items of clothing during travel or while keeping all articles of clothing conveniently together during laundry operations. The invention can also be used for storage, while keeping clothes securely folded. The Sock Washing Bag is fabricated of nylon mesh netting, and has openings at the top for a hanger to be inserted when needed for hang drying indoors or outdoors, or to enable hanging storage of clothing. The bag can also be folded and fastened by Velcro and snaps to enable attachment to hangers in the closet or car, or to be folded neatly into a suitcase or trunk, keeping clothing organized and secure during travel. It also has individual caches with separate compartments for storing various categories of laundry, including delicates, hosiery, gloves, socks, etc.

The present invention can be used for machine-washing and drying of all laundry items, as well as for storage of clothing while traveling. It is washable in conventional washing machines, and stable to drying in conventional home laundry driers.

It is an object of the present invention to simplify the washing of clothes by collecting all articles of clothing together, and keeping them together throughout the laundry process.

It is another object of the present invention to help prevent the loss of one item of a pair of clothing during laundry. Such items include socks, mittens, and the like.

It is still another object of the present invention to provide a convenient method of storage of clothing, while keeping paired items - such as socks – from becoming separated and possibly lost or misplaced.

It is yet another object of the present invention to provide a method of conducting laundry that avoids the possibility of dropping cleaned clothing, whether wet or dry, during the laundry process.

It is a further object of the present invention to provide a means for transporting clothing wherein matched pairs of socks, mittens, gloves, and the like are kept together and not misplaced.

Further objects of the present invention will become apparent from the reading of the attached description and drawings.

Brief Description of Drawings

Figure 1: Right side up view of invention with handle on top and straps visible.

Figure 2: Back side of the invention

Figure 3: View of the invention with laundry attached

Figure 4: View of the invention folded for storage

Detailed Description

Detailed descriptions of the preferred embodiment are provided herein. It is to be understood, however, that the present invention may be embodied in various forms. Therefore, specific details disclosed herein are not to be interpreted as limiting, but rather as a basis for the claims and as a representative foundation for teaching one skilled in the art to employ the present invention in virtually any appropriately detailed system, structure or manner.

The present invention is constructed primarily of nylon washable mesh to enable either machine-washing or quick drying either in a dryer or on a clothesline. It conveniently takes a wash load straight from the washer to the dryer in one easy sweep with all sets of clothing and pairs of socks intact, without needing to repeat the sorting process or hunt for the missing piece(s). The mesh fabric allows clothing to “breathe”, and causes less wrinkles during travel or storage. It also decreases the moldy odor caused by damp clothes or wet weather.

More than one set of clothes can be washed and/or dried at one time. They will still be completely washed and dried to satisfaction through the use of the present invention.

The Sock Washing Bag quickly “freshens up” an outfit or entire vacation wardrobe. The operator can simply insert a dryer sheet in the dryer with the Sock Washing Bag for 5-10 minutes, remove, and hang the bag, complete with outfits.

A preferred embodiment of the present invention is shown in Figure 1. In this figure, the preferred embodiment is shown from its frontal, or inner side. This is the side where articles of clothing are secured. When the present invention is closed, as described below, the frontal side is no longer exposed to view.

The handle **1** at the top of the present invention as shown is used for hand carrying the bag for purposes of transport.

The hook and loop fasteners **2,3** are for the accommodation of a clothes hanger, if necessary, for traveling, storage, or air-drying the clothing. This is better shown in Figure 3.

The backing, or foundation of the device is shown as **60**. It is preferably composed of nylon washable mesh construction.

The vertical Velcro or hook and loop fastener strips **13A, 13B, 14, 15, 16, 17, & 18** are used in pairs to secure pairs of socks or other clothing. Each comes as a pair, as illustrated by **13A** and **13B**. Each section has one end affixed to the backing panel **60** and the other end free until removably affixed to the free end of its pairing strip.

The elastic band holding strips **20, 21, 25, 27, 28** shown in Fig. 1 are for securing socks, delicates, and smaller laundry items.

The closeable and securable pocket **26** can be used for securing large laundry items. Note that the securing edge **42** of the pocket is illustrated in Fig. 1.

The backing panel **60** is surrounded along its perimeter by a piping band **70**. Situated along band **70** at intervals are fastening means, used for connecting sides of the backing panel when folded. In Fig. 1, these fastening means are illustrated as buttons **10** along the upper piping sides, and buttonhole slots **11** along the lower piping sides. These are fastened when the device is folded along its midline horizontal axis **50**. The resulting bag is displayed in Fig. 4. The fastening means are to be adhered together when folding the present invention, readying it for machine washing, or transporting it.

It will be noted that the present invention, when disassembled, is not an actual bag, but rather a rectangular surface backing **60**, comprised preferably of nylon mesh, with a plurality of cloth and Velcro straps fixedly attached, and an array of Velcro strips and snaps or other fastening means on the edges for closing the invention and transforming it into a bag. The present invention is best used in this closed bag form during laundry operations, storage, and travel.

Figure 2 shows the back or outer side of the present invention. This will become the outside of the bag, when the bag is formed by means of attaching opposite sides to each other. It is this side, which is visible during most uses of the present invention, other than when adding or removing items of clothing. The nylon mesh backing panel **60** is clearly visible in this view, along with handle **1**, attachment straps **2, 3**, and buttonhole slots **11**.

Figure 3 depicts the preferred embodiment when loaded with socks for purposes of laundering. The socks are held in place, each with its mate, throughout the laundry process. The straps can also be used to secure laces, belts, or other appended items that might otherwise be damaged or lost in a washer or dryer. Underwear **84** is shown held by vertical Velcro fastener strips **13**. Socks are shown held by elastic band holding strips **20**. Pocket **26** is shown in closed condition, with clothing within.

Note also in Fig. 3 the use of the holding straps **2 & 3** for securing the invention to a closet hanger. This would be an appropriate use after the device had been loaded, run through the laundering process, and removed after drying.

Figure 4 shows the preferred embodiment when folded. In this manner, the invention can carry clean laundry in luggage for traveling, or in a drawer for home use, all the while keeping mated pairs of socks, etc., together. Note that the device is folded along its central axis, and held in position with fastening means such as buttons **10** and slots **11**.

In the contemplated use of the invention, dirty clothes are paired as necessary, and loaded on the front side of backing panel 60 through the use of the various attachment means such as 13, 20, and 26. The panel is optionally closed and secured with attached fasteners 10 and 11, and put through the normal laundering process. Said process might include a standard home washing machine with laundry detergent, followed by a drying process, either on a clothes line, or in a home dryer. Note that while the bag may remain in closed fashion during drying, it is preferably to re-open it, especially for air drying, such as on a clothes line.

Note that the clothes can be removed after the laundry process, or they can be left on the panel for as long as desired. A suitable storage method is hanging from a closet hanger, as shown in Fig. 3.

The invention also serves as a luggage item. Clothes can be secured to the device, folded, and fastened. The closed bag thus produced is displayed in Fig. 4. It can be carried by handle 1 and thereby transported between nearby or distant locations.

It is thus to be seen that the present invention is more than a laundry aid. It also aids in organization and retention of clothing, particularly small articles of clothing, during home storage and during times of travel.